**Date issued:** 22nd of February 2023

**Freedom of Information Request** 28/24

We are writing in response to your Freedom of Information request. Your request has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and our Data and Information Management Policy.

**YOU ASKED US…**

1. **-How many trees have been cut down in the work for Transport for Wales from Cardiff Bay to Cardiff City Centre?**
2. **-In terms of area, how much vegetation has been removed or destroyed in the creation of the new Cardiff Bay line?**
3. **-Have Transport for Wales considered any animal habitats when planning and creating the line?**
4. **-Has animal habitats and the environmental impact of removing vegetation been considered in the process of creating the Cardiff Bay line?**
5. **-Will any more vegetation have to be cut down before the completion of the line?**
6. **-What will Transport for Wales be doing to offset the environmental impact of creating the new Bay line?**

**RESPONSE**

**-How many trees have been cut down in the work for Transport for Wales from Cardiff Bay to Cardiff City Centre?**

To date, fewer than ten trees have been felled to facilitate access to the railway line by works vehicles from Lloyd George Avenue, and to establish temporary works compounds and hoarding for the early project activities.

All of the trees impacted are of early maturity, given that they were planted around the year 2000 under local regeneration works led by the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation.  As such, no specimen tree is estimated to be over 35 years in age (under 25 years planted in situ, and under ten years in age as a standard planting specimen, from nursery stock).  Most of the impacted trees are non-native species to Wales, including the species *Liriodendron tulipifera, Pyrus communis and Quercus rubra,* serving more aesthetic utilitarian value than being intended to support local biodiversity through features suited to habitat creation, such as bird nesting or knot holes for bat roosting.

**-In terms of area, how much vegetation has been removed or destroyed in the creation of the new Cardiff Bay line?**

In addition to trees, the following categories of land are expected to be impacted by the works at Cardiff Bay.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Phase 1 Habitat type** | **Compound A – Butetown (m2)** | **Compound B – Temp. Works (m2)** | **Compound C – Cardiff Bay (m2)** | **Total (m2)** |
| J1.4 | Introduced Shrub | **360** | **335** | **375** | **1070** |
| A2.1 | Scrub - Dense/Continuous | **1618** | **823** | **143** | **2584** |
| J1.2 | Cultivated/Disturbed Land - Amenity Grassland | **740** | **371** |  | **1111** |
| J3.6 1 | Hardstanding | **2610** | **1** | **457** | **3058** |
| A2.2 | Scrub - Scattered | **948** | **354** | **2792** | **4094** |
| J1.3 | Cultivated/Disturbed Land - Ephemeral/Short Perennial | **948** | **398** | **3888** | **5234** |
| B2.2 | Neutral Grassland - Semi-improved |  | **813** | **2584** | **3397** |
| C3.1 | Other Tall Herb and Fern - Ruderal |  |  | **1096** | **1096** |
| J3.6 | Buildings |  |  | **24** | **24** |

Total areas of JNCC Phase 1 habitat categories proposed to be impacted by each works area of the Bay Route Section development.

**-Have Transport for Wales considered any animal habitats when planning and creating the line?**

Initial habitat mapping for the route section was undertaken by Mott MacDonald in 2017. TfW’s Managing Agent, Amey Infrastructure Wales has since undertaken walkovers of the BAY route section to identify presence/likely absence of protected species including bats and badgers. Amey have also undertaken Phase 1 habitat surveys in relation to Bute Street Station, Cardiff Bay Station and the Cardiff Bay compounds. As such, all protected species ruled in for further site survey have returned zero confirmed findings.

Reporting is available for all previous surveys undertaken on the BAY line and can be requested through CVL Document Management.

 **-Has animal habitats and the environmental impact of removing vegetation been considered in the process of creating the Cardiff Bay line?**

 All clearance works in relation to the Cardiff Bay Line have been undertaken in line with the route-wide method statements provided to all contractors on the project. These cover methodologies to be employed for vegetation clearance in relation to breeding birds, reptiles and low potential bat trees outlining timings of works, methods of clearance, use of suitable equipment and supervision of the works by a suitably qualified ecologist. The route-wide method statements are available on request through DMCVL.

**-Will any more vegetation have to be cut down before the completion of the line?**

In total, the following trees have been identified as requiring impact to facilitate the construction of the improved Cardiff Bay line, and this list has been subject to Permitted Development negotiations with Cardiff City Council planning team:-

| **Ref.** | **Action** | **No. trees affected** | **Tree categories** | **Justification** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| T01-T11 incl., G01, T29, T115-T119, T30-T32, T37-T40 | Pre-construction: No action required.During construction: Protect trees with protective barriers - Where RPAs are compromised.Post construction: No action required. | **24 +1G** | **11** | **A** | Trees to be retained and protected.  RPZ fencing to go around any trees adjacent to development area, as shown in constraints plan |
| **10** | **B** |
| **4** | **C** |
| T61 | Pre-construction:fell and remove to facilitate Cardiff Bay Station Public Concourse construction | **1** | **1** | **A** | This tree falls within the permanent works footprint of the new Cardiff Bay Station Public Concourse. |
| T12-T28 incl., T98, T101 incl. | Pre-construction:fell and remove to facilitate construction – Butetown Station footprint | **20** | **5** | **A** | These trees fall within the permanent works footprint of the new Butetown Station. |
| **13** | **B** |
| **1** | **C** |
| T33-T36 incl. G02, G03. | Pre-construction:fell and remove to facilitate construction  | **4 + 2G** | **2** | **A** | Figure 2, below, shows limited clearances for low-loading flatbed truck deliveries of rail to Bay lineside. |
| **4** | **B** |
| T48-T60 incl. G04 | Pre-construction:fell and remove to facilitate construction – Cardiff Bay Station footprint | **13 + 1G** | **7** | **A** | These trees fall within the permanent works footprint of the new Cardiff Bay Station. |
| **5** | **B** |
| **1** | **C** |

Additionally, street trees along Bute Street are expected to be impacted to facilitate the Overhead Line Clearance requirements for electrifying the line.  This will require a mixture of full felling and partial crown reduction to achieve the required safety distance limits.  Currently, the full extent of this impact is unknown until the line electrification design has been finalised.  Current estimates predict that around 17 out of the 54 trees lining the eastern pavement of Bute Street alongside the railway retaining wall are anticipated to require felling.  Crown reductions will mostly be in the region of 1-4metres.

**-What will Transport for Wales be doing to offset the environmental impact of creating the new Bay line?**

Our [Biodiversity Action Plan](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftfw.wales%2Fabout-us%2Fsustainable-development%2Fresources%2Fecology-and-biodiversity%2Fbiodiversity-action-plan&data=05%7C02%7CKaty.Griffin%40tfw.wales%7C20e59a51e355471a421f08dc296fd575%7C87dcd024301948269956ba76b2a04ff4%7C0%7C0%7C638430807497903772%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nX4YHTNjnNL2A5IwTjZpE41Ky%2FfdCQ%2FipaRwjCycU5A%3D&reserved=0) sets how we protect and enhance biodiversity while delivering a better, more integrated and more sustainable transport network. We’ll be investigating all options for biodiversity enhancement post project; including a full review of our lineside assets and what/where we can maximise wildlife benefits. This will include habitat creation and habitat enhancement; where appropriate. This will create better, bigger, more robust and connected habitats for native wildlife and introduce new life alongside our railway network. In terms of what we will be planting, this will be determined on a case-by-case basis as to what is most suitable in the local area in terms of benefitting biodiversity and climate change adaptation, whilst also balancing health and safety requirements. For example, in some areas low growing shrub or grassland vegetation may offer greater wildlife benefits compared to replanting individual trees.

Yours sincerely,

**Transport for Wales**

**Appeal Rights**

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the Head of Freedom of Information at either Transport for Wales, 3 Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH or freedomofinformation@tfw.wales. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner (ICO) can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or you can contact the ICO through the 'Make a Complaint' section of their website on this link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The relevant section to select will be "Official or Public Information".